

SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON AFRICA, GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS
and INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS**

Christopher H. Smith, New Jersey, Chairman

Hearing on Implementing the 1998 Torture Victims Relief Act
June 23, 2005

In the years that I have been in the Congress, I have been privileged to work on human rights issues around the globe, both through the International Relations Committee and through my work as Chairman and Co-Chairman of the Helsinki Commission. Through this work, I have met incredible, inspiring individuals. Sadly, I have also encountered many heart-breaking, gut-wrenching stories as well, and many of those involve torture. From Cuba to China, from Saudi Arabia to Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, I learned that unspeakable acts of torture are common – and effective – tools of repression.

These compelling personal testimonies led me to author the Torture Victims Relief Act a decade ago. This law was crafted with the invaluable input of internationally respected leaders in the field of torture relief, such as Doug Johnson, who will testify later today, John Salzburg, and others. Designed to help address the continuing world-wide problem of torture and its lingering effects on torture survivors, the law promotes treatment for the severe physical and psychological consequences of torture. With medical, psychological and social services, torture survivors have found healing and are stable and productive members of their communities.

We now have several years of experience in implementing the Torture Victims Relief Act. At today's hearing, we will hear from witnesses whose organizations have first-hand experience with the law, and I look forward to hearing their testimony. We are fortunate that several of our witnesses are in Washington to mark the United Nations International Day in Support of the Victims of Torture. I regret that Dr. Wade Horn, from the Department of Health and Human Services, is out of town and unable to testify today, but he has sent over a statement which will be included in the record.

Witnesses

Our first witness today is Lloyd Feinberg, Manager of USAID's Victims of Torture Fund. Mr. Feinberg is responsible for the oversight and management of a portfolio of three special funds which provide over \$35 million annually in development assistance. These include the War Victims Fund, the Victims of Torture Fund and the Displaced Children and Orphans Fund. This program currently supports over 85 programs in more than forty-five countries in the Asia and Near East, Africa, Eastern Europe, and Central and Latin America regions.

Mr. Feinberg began his international career as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Philippines in the mid 1960s and has over 40 years' experience managing social sector programs in developing countries. After the Peace Corps, and before joining USAID in 1984, he managed NGO development programs in Indonesia, Ethiopia, Nepal and Ecuador. From 1980 – 1983, he served as Project Manager on the World Bank Transmigration II project in Indonesia.

Accompanying Mr. Feinberg is Danuta Lockett, who currently works as a senior advisor for the Victims of Torture Fund. Her role is to provide technical guidance

to the Fund and grantees in line with Fund's mandate. She has been instrumental in developing the Fund's guidelines and in providing technical input on program design, assessment and evaluation of country projects.

Dr. Lockett's career spans 20 years of work in the international development arena. She has worked for numerous development agencies and NGOs in Latin America, Asia, the Near East and Africa. Her technical expertise is in human rights and transitions related to conflict.

For our second panel of witnesses, we are joined by Sheikh Sackor. Mr. Sackor is a survivor of torture from Liberia. In 1997, he started an organization called Humanist Watch Liberia. As a result of speaking out for human rights and democracy, he was repeatedly imprisoned and tortured. Fearing for his life, he fled Liberia, and came to the United States, where in 2004, he was granted political asylum. Mr. Sackor, thank you for your courage in being here with us today.

Dr. Allen Keller is founder and director of the Bellevue/NYU Program for Survivors of Torture. This remarkable program is jointly sponsored by Bellevue Hospital, the Nation's oldest public hospital, and New York University School of Medicine, a leader in medical education and research. The Program provides comprehensive, medical, mental health and social services to refugees and asylum seekers who have suffered from torture and other human rights abuses. Dr. Keller is also chair of the Policy Committee of the National Consortium of Torture Treatment Centers, which includes 35 organizations in 21 states dedicated to advancing the knowledge, technical capacities and resources devoted to the care of torture survivors and acts collectively to prevent torture worldwide.

Finally, we are joined by Douglas A. Johnson. Mr. Johnson has, since 1988, been executive director of the Center for Victims of Torture, the oldest torture treatment center in the United States. CVT provides comprehensive care for victims of government-sponsored torture, conducts research and training, and undertakes policy efforts to commit the U.S. and other institutions to work against torture and aid torture survivors. Mr. Johnson also serves as an original member of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's Advisory Panel on the Prevention of Torture (established in 1998), and he has testified before Congress many times.